

Stimulus Money to Give Face Lift to Public Lands Throughout Nevada

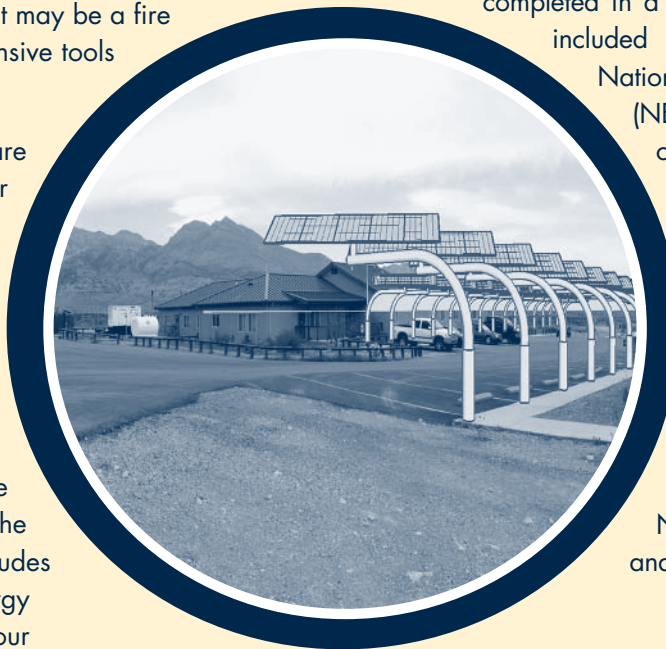
When we look around our homes, most of us can think of several projects we'd love to tackle if we just had a little bit of extra money. A new coat of paint, a new concrete driveway that's safer for our children or even tackling the overgrown vegetation that may be a fire hazard but will require expensive tools and expertise.

In a time when many of us are putting investments into our own property on the back burner, President Obama enacted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) on February 17, 2009, to stimulate the downturned economy. The Act is a remarkable response to a crisis unlike any since the Great Depression and includes measures to enhance energy independence, modernize our nation's infrastructure, expand educational opportunities, preserve and improve affordable health care, provide tax relief and protect those in greatest need.

Of the \$3 billion the Department of the Interior received, \$305 million is allocated to the BLM for 605 projects to be completed nationwide. BLM Nevada received \$27 million in stimulus funding for more than 40 projects, to help jumpstart the state's economy, create or save jobs and address needs and challenges on our public lands. The goal of the stimulus is to hire private contractors to complete these quick-turn-around projects within the next year or so.

How were the projects chosen?

Each of Nevada's district offices was tasked with deciding which projects could be started relatively quickly and completed in a timely manner. Other criteria included whether projects requiring National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance had already completed the NEPA process; if the project areas were "treasured landscapes," or part of BLM's National Landscape Conservation System, such as the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area or the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area; and whether they had "green" or renewable elements to them.



A rendering of the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area fire station parking lot, where solar panel covers will be installed as part of a capital improvement project. The fire station is one of 15 BLM facilities to receive photovoltaic power systems to reduce the Bureau's carbon foot print and provide savings in utility payments.

What can the public expect to see as a result of this funding?

Renewable energy projects implemented, habitat restoration completed, abandoned

mine features made safe, rehabilitation and reconstruction of roads and trails as well as capital improvements completed in some of the public's favorite areas. For instance, a solar power facilities project will involve the installation of photovoltaic power systems for 15 BLM facilities across the state, including

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State Director's Column

In May, Secretary Salazar announced \$305 million in funding for more than 650 BLM job-stimulus projects, as part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009. The backdrop for the announcement was Nevada's Red Rock Canyon National

Conservation Area—specifically our fire and law enforcement station—where a stimulus project will soon take place. The facility, which currently runs on electricity produced by a generator, will receive solar panels as part of a capital improvement project. This station is one of 15 Nevada BLM facilities to receive photovoltaic power systems to reduce the Bureau's carbon foot print and provide savings in utility payments.

Nevada received \$27.2 million of stimulus funding for more than 40 projects, which will assist in creating jobs and address needs and challenges on our public lands. This investment in Nevada and throughout the United States will unveil itself through habitat restoration; various construction projects; restoration and maintenance of roads and trails; the closure of abandoned mine features; and the advancement of the nation's development and transmission of renewable energy on public lands. In addition to being stewards of our public lands, BLM is responsible to ensure the public's safety and to help create memorable and positive experiences on these lands for this generation and those to come.

Abandoned mine closures and road reconstruction are a few ways we will be tackling increased safety measures with this new funding. For instance, in Clark County we will be taking measures to improve the safety on numerous abandoned mines. This will include placing gates in adits to prevent human entry and filling in shafts that are large enough to swallow unsuspecting OHV enthusiasts.

An emphasis also is being placed on facilitating the processing of renewable energy projects. Funds will be invested in regional planning and analysis of potential solar development. This will allow for an expedited processing



From left to right: Congresswoman Dina Titus, Secretary Salazar, Acting BLM Director Mike Pool and BLM Nevada State Director Ron Wenker

of pending applications that also meets environmental standards.

This is an exciting time for America's public lands. As Nevada's lands get a face lift over the next several months, you can watch this transformation by visiting these places in person, or by following the progress from your computer by visiting www.recovery.gov or www.interior.gov/recovery.

– Ron Wenker

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Questions, comments and requests may be sent to:

Heather Emmons, Editor

BLM Office of Communications

P.O. Box 12000 - Reno, NV 89520-0006

Email: Heather_Emmons@blm.gov


Ron Wenker - State Director

Amy Lueders - Associate State Director

Doran Sanchez - Chief, Office of Communications

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fire stations, air bases and office complexes. The proposed power systems will include ground mounted arrays and covered parking structures with solar panels built on the roofs, which will reduce the Bureau's carbon footprint and provide savings in utility payments.

Other projects across the state include thinning of pinyon and juniper to reduce fire danger and improve sage grouse habitat, soil conditions and watershed values. North of Battle Mountain, in an area devastated by years of fires, 10,000 acres of sagebrush habitat will be restored to improve habitat for sage grouse, mule deer, pygmy rabbit and pronghorn.

And in an effort to provide better customer service and visitor contact, two capital improvements projects involve improving or building facilities for staff. In Gerlach, an administrative site and visitor center for the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area is being erected. The building will provide temporary housing for employees, storage and

work areas, staging areas and a centralized location to be staffed by the Black Rock Friends group to assist visitors to the area.

The Rhyolite Historic Townsite in southern Nye County near Beatty is part of the Death Valley experience for about 100,000 visitors annually from all over the world. Hosts are on-site a few hours per day to answer visitors' questions, keep the townsite clean and protect the townsite's cultural resources. To provide better protection and services, two RV pads have been installed to allow hosts to live on-site in their RVs and trailers. The ARRA project will add to this by installing a potable water system, a septic system and utilities.

BLM will update each project's progress over the next several months. To watch the progress of projects, visit: www.recovery.gov or www.interior.gov/recovery

Heather Emmons
Nevada State Office

How to Obtain a Federal Contract or Grant

The Federal Government is obligated to seek competition to the maximum extent practicable when it comes to contracting opportunities. To accomplish this, the Government uses the World Wide Web to post contracting opportunities.

Search for Opportunities

Contractors can search for business opportunities and sub-contracting opportunities on the website Federal Business Opportunities located at www.fbo.gov. Additionally, the Department of the Interior also posts business opportunities on FedConnect at the website <https://www.fedconnect.net/FedConnect/>.

Contractor Requirements

Each time a contractor submits a quote/proposal in response to an opportunity, they must include their 'Representations and Certifications.' This 15-page document can be completed by the contractor on an annual basis through the web-based certification available at <https://orca.bpn.gov/>.

In order for the Government to issue an award to a contractor, the contractor must be registered in a Federal database called the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) at www.ccr.gov. The website has a toll free number if assistance is needed. It is beneficial for contractors seeking business with the Government to register in CCR at any time, as this is the database that Government contracting officers will search when seeking sources.

Additional Opportunities

The Federal Government also enters into Assistance Agreements with partners for projects and programs that benefit the public. These financial assistance opportunities are posted on www.Grants.gov. Recipients of financial assistance must be registered in CCR as well as Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) at <http://www.fms.treas.gov/asap/>. ASAP allows recipients to obtain their funds electronically as needed.

Renewable Energy Resources Will Create Dramatic Shift in Public Land Management

The rush is on to find, develop and deliver new energy sources. Like the land rush and the gold rush of the past, the nation's public lands offer a vast bounty to meet America's need to reduce its dependence on foreign oil, build a clean energy economy and create new jobs. The Department of the Interior has made the development and delivery of renewable energy its top priority. To facilitate a rapid and responsible move to large-scale production of renewable energy, a task force is working to resolve permitting, development and production obstacles and is prioritizing permitting and appropriate environmental review of transmission rights-of-way.

The nearly 48 million acres of BLM-managed public land in Nevada offer large amounts of virtually untapped geothermal, solar and wind resources. Nevada is also an epicenter for needed transmission lines to deliver newly-developed renewable energy to the entire West.

BLM Nevada has anticipated the need to make adjustments in staffing to manage the increase in applications for geothermal leasing and development, and solar and wind rights-of-ways. A few new hires were made to bring in renewable energy project managers. These managers will work with an assemblage of existing program staff to ensure that appropriate consultation with Native Americans is made and that analyses required by the National Environmental Protection Act are science based using best management practices.

Renewable energy project managers are on board in the Battle Mountain, Ely, Southern Nevada and Carson City districts. By establishing energy teams, BLM Nevada expects to boost permit processing capacity and keep the environmental process moving so that energy companies can start meeting America's energy needs.

New Salt Wells Geothermal Plant Commissioned

Enel North America completed the first phase of a 20 megawatt geothermal power plant on public land at Salt Wells, in Churchill County. The 130,000-square-foot Salt Wells plant utilizes a "closed-loop" binary system that continually replenishes the geothermal resource used in the power generation process. A binary system uses two fluids – in this case, hot water from underground wells heats isobutene and turns it into a vapor that turns the turbines to generate electricity. The turbines are producing enough electricity to supply more than 8,000 homes.

Mark Struble

Carson City District Office



Full Steam Ahead: Nevada Geothermal Power's Blue Mountain Site is in Development

Nevada Geothermal Power Blue Mountain 1 LLC, a Canadian-based energy company, is in the development of Phase I of the Blue Mountain Geothermal Project. The project is 25 miles west of Winnemucca in Humboldt County on the western slope of Blue Mountain, 21 miles from the state electrical transmission grid. The property is

located on four federal geothermal leases, encompassing 4,612 acres managed by the BLM's Winnemucca District.

BLM has approved all the necessary permits for the operation and utilization of the federal geothermal resources to service the power plants. This includes 20 geothermal production and injection wells, associated access roads, pipelines, water source wells and other supporting facilities.

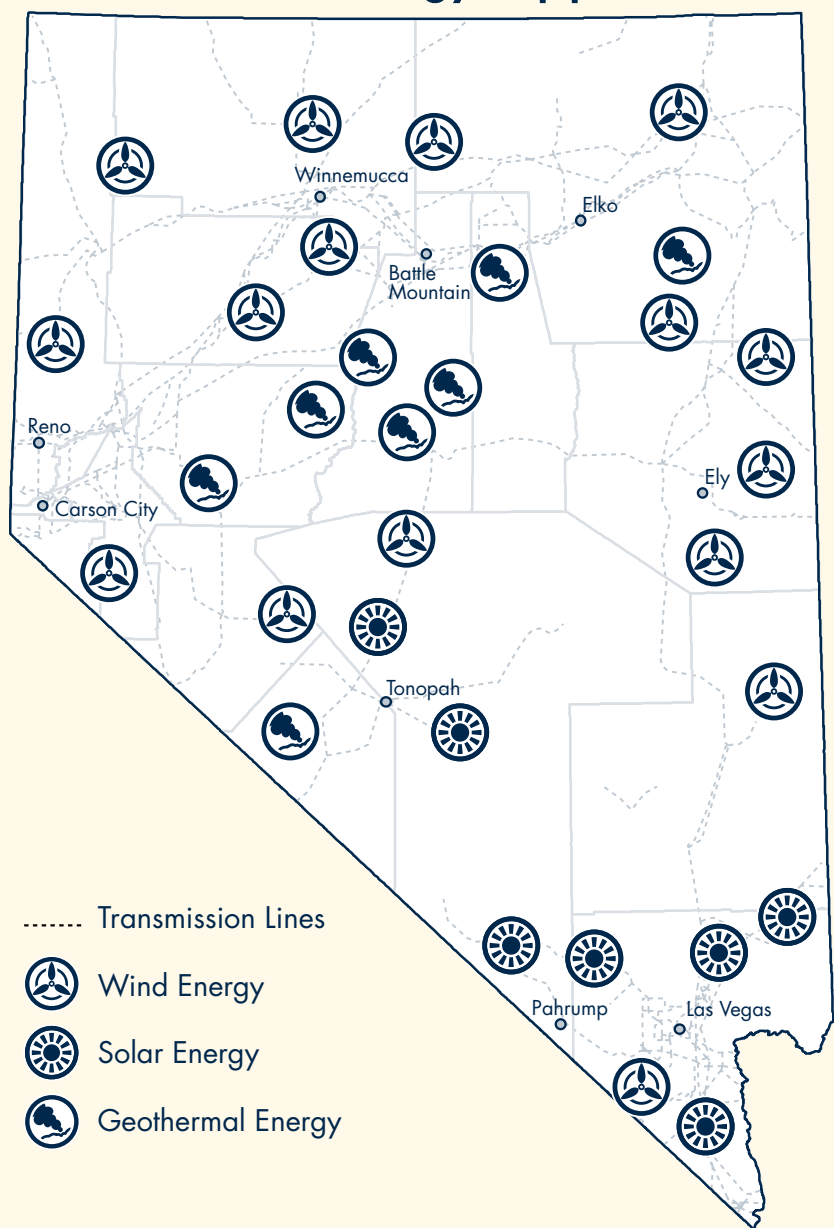
Additional BLM approvals include the Blue Mountain federal geothermal unit agreement, which encompasses adjacent private lands and rights-of-way for a 21-mile 120 kV transmission line and switching station. The power plant is located on private land within the unit, so a BLM-approved construction permit was not required.

Ormat Nevada Inc. is contracted for the construction of the plant, which is expected to be completed ahead of schedule and generating power by the end of the year.

Lisa Ross

Winnemucca District Office

Renewable Energy Applications





Marijuana Gardens on Public Lands

The Dangers Unseen

The Encounter

Last October, three Bureau of Land Management (BLM) employees conducting stream surveys in northern Nevada came upon a marijuana garden and encountered three Hispanic men pointing handguns and a rifle at them.

The men interrogated the BLM employees for about 10 minutes before allowing them to leave. The employees hid out until the cover of darkness, and then made their way to a nearby road and were found by a BLM search party that night—shaken, but safe.

Early the next day, the BLM Office of Law Enforcement Security, along with city, county and state law enforcement officers and a National Guard helicopter secured the area. The harvesters had fled and left behind everything in their make-shift camp—shoes, food, clothes, trash—and 800 marijuana plants and 150 pounds of processed buds with an estimated street value of \$5 million.

Law enforcement officials recognized aspects of the operation as the practices of the Mexican drug cartels. This was the third incident involving Mexican drug cartel marijuana gardens on BLM-managed public land in Nevada this season. Two others were in southern Nevada and did not involve public encounters with the growers.

Since 2004, the Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO) have greatly expanded their marijuana cultivation activities throughout the United States, and extensively use remote areas of both state and Federal lands (BLM, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, etc.). Marijuana cultivation on BLM-administered public lands has increased dramatically in the past four years as reflected in the increasing number of plants seized during the past few years: 2004—220,000; 2005—246,290; 2006—390,454; 2007—457,412; and 2008—473,771.

The abundance of public lands throughout the West makes

marijuana grow sites a concern for all law enforcement who are working with local, state, and Federal agencies and organizations to increase public awareness of these potential dangers. As summer nears, vast numbers of tourists will visit the national parks, forests and public lands without a thought or warning of this hidden danger.

The Threat

Historically, domestic marijuana growers use booby traps to protect the site. A few examples of booby traps are fishhooks hung from trees, shotgun devices, camouflaged animals traps placed on the ground covering rat traps or foot spikes.

“Face-to-face encounters with the marijuana growers aren’t common,” said Mark Pirtle, BLM Nevada Special Agent in Charge. “But the situation involving the three BLM employees in October represents an alarming trend.”

Many states have documented instances of public land users being threatened and shot at

because they came too close to a marijuana garden. In September 2005, two hunters in the Tonto National Forest were fired upon by guards at a grow site. The hunters returned fire, evacuated the area and notified the police.

The Danger

DTO workers are armed, dangerous and determined to protect their grow sites, and with an average street value of \$2,000 to \$4,000 per plant, the stakes are high. One captured suspect told law enforcement that he was instructed not to run, but to fight it out, and was equipped with a broad array of sophisticated weapons, hand guns and high-powered rifles.

While incidents of contact between drug traffickers and the public are rare, some have been fatal.

In June 2006, Robert Cory Want and Ivan Tilloston were

What to do if you find a marijuana garden

- Turn around and immediately leave in the same direction in which you came.
- If you encounter garden workers, do exactly as you are told.
- Report any incidents or unusual or suspicious activity to any law enforcement agency.

shot and killed in a forest area near Covelo, Calif. Authorities believe the men were killed in close proximity to three marijuana grow sites found near the victims' bodies. Authorities eradicated 5,000 marijuana plants from the sites.

"We hear all the news reports about all the drug wars going on in the border areas—the murders, shootings and everything," said Pirtle. "I don't think that a lot of the public realizes that these people are here, and these DTO cultivation activities present a clear and immediate danger to the public and public land agency employees."

With the ongoing fortification of the U.S.-Mexico border and increased number of border agents to stop smuggling and illegal immigration into this country, the DTOs began looking at how to lower the costs and difficulty associated with transporting marijuana into the United States. The economical alternative is to grow it in the U.S. on public lands. The Office of National Drug Control Policy estimates that 75-80 percent of marijuana grown outdoors in the U.S. is grown on state and federal lands.

"The risk of unexpected or deadly encounters among the public, agency employees, and law enforcement and Mexican Cartel growers increases as the number of grow sites increase," said Pirtle.

The Gardens

There are two types of marijuana gardens, domestic and DTO. Domestic/local marijuana grow sites can average 100 to 200 plants. They sometimes are armed to protect against "patch pirates"—a.k.a. "thieves"—who often pose as hunters. They also may use a variety of booby traps to protect their gardens.

DTO marijuana gardens can range from a few hundred plants at a single grow site to thousands of plants encompassing multiple large gardens, sometimes miles apart. There are documented cases of marijuana gardens that contain as many as 17,000 plants in one location. Other gardens are planted and cultivated extremely close to residential areas bordering public lands. Multi campsites also are established with "armed workers" paid to protect the grow sites at all costs from rival cartels, patch pirates and law enforcement.



Marijuana dries in a garden that was raided on public lands

The Cartels

The DTOs' primary method of operation is to smuggle illegal aliens across the U.S.-Mexico border and transport them to locations throughout the country. The workers are responsible for planting, watering and harvesting the gardens. The DTOs prefer the BLM, Forest Service and National Park Service public lands, especially areas not frequently visited and where there is water.

Garden bosses keep the workers provided with food, water and tools and typically haul in miles of hoses and set up elaborate irrigation systems. In some instances, they provide firearms, including rifles. Workers are not allowed to leave until the garden is harvested, and may be camped at the grow site for months at a time.

Typically, the marijuana growing season is late May throughout October. However, the DTO sites typically operate from April through November, with activities beginning as early as February in preparation for the season - setting up camp: tents; camouflaged nurseries and processing areas; building lookout towers and fortified bunkers; brush built up to conceal the grow and campsite; clearing the land and laying hoses. Some DTO operations also use sophisticated surveillance equipment/warning devices to detect potential encounters throughout the planting and harvest.

"As a result, DTO marijuana cultivation operations can

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present a year-round danger to public land users,” said Pirtle. “Everyone needs to be alert when visiting or performing work-related activities on the public lands and report any suspicious activities—especially in remote areas.”

The Impacts

In addition to the potential threat to human life, the natural resources and wildlife can be severely impacted from marijuana cultivation activities. In forested areas, trees are cut to allow more light to the plants. Natural vegetation is stripped away to prepare the land for planting. Streams are diverted to create dams for irrigation. Chemicals used as pesticides and fertilizers are dumped into the water and pose a serious threat to the ecological balance of the public land.

Animals are poached for food or killed to protect the plants, and the on-site trash and human waste creates significant environmental impacts that are expensive to remediate. Conservative estimates from a National Park Service report a cost of \$10,000 per acre to restore these areas and haul away trash and chemicals left behind from a marijuana garden.

The Challenge

With funding received this year, the BLM added 10 new Special Agent positions in the Western states to increase its capability to investigate and eradicate marijuana cultivation activities. The BLM also established the Marijuana Investigation Support Team (MIST). The MIST consists of 28 BLM Special Agents and Rangers who are trained and equipped to supplement the Special Agent force in California and Oregon to investigate large-scale marijuana cultivation activities. Local, county, state and Federal agencies throughout the country also are combining forces to counteract Cartel drug activities in an effort to protect the public and the natural resources as the DTOs expand their marijuana operations—and they are getting results.

Last year, the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of California announced a Federal grand jury returned an eight-count indictment charging 13 illegal aliens

from Mexico with conspiracy to produce and distribute methamphetamine, and to grow and distribute more than 1,000 plants of marijuana. In the process of serving related search warrants, officers arrested seven additional illegal aliens from Mexico considered to be marijuana grow site workers. They were immediately deported.

A similar operation in Tulare County, Calif., resulted in the eradication of nearly half a million marijuana plants—more than 161,000 directly from public lands—and 42 arrests. In St. George, Utah, BLM, Forest Service and the Drug Enforcement Administration eradicated two marijuana gardens in April, and seized another 9,000 plants in the St. George area in June.

A BLM Special Agent investigation in Oregon resulted in the arrest of eight suspects, the seizure of 10,000 marijuana plants, seven vehicles, seven firearms, and the indictment of five suspects on Federal charges.

In June, just 150 miles north of Reno in Lassen County, Calif., two officers were shot and a suspect was killed during a shooting where law enforcement came across a suspected marijuana operation. The Lassen County Sheriff's Office, the Susanville Police Department and the BLM were searching for marijuana farms.

Also in June, BLM Idaho Special Agents and Rangers and the Owyhee County Sheriff's Office Deputies raided a garden where 12,545 marijuana seedlings were seized.

The Goal

“The BLM wants its employees and the public who visit and recreate on public lands to be safe,” said Pirtle. “It is important to always be aware of what is going on around you. The dangers are real and the consequences can be deadly.”

“Should anyone inadvertently walk up on a grow site, turn around and immediately leave the way you walked in. If you encounter a worker, do exactly as you're told. And always report any unusual or suspicious activity to your local county, state or Federal law enforcement office.”

Doran Sanchez
Nevada State Office

BLM Helps Provide Affordable Housing in Las Vegas

Discount pricing on public land in the Las Vegas Valley has made it possible to build new affordable housing for seniors and families. BLM sold a five-acre parcel to Clark County for the discounted price of \$198,000 (fair market price was appraised at \$3 million) in 2007. The county then transferred the land to Nevada HAND, a nonprofit developer, which built the Harmon Pines Senior Apartments.

"Harmon Pines became a success through dedicated and committed partners being positive and flexible in working to achieve a common goal," said Southern Nevada District Office Manager Mary Jo Rugwell. "The collaborative efforts of the Nevada congressional delegation, Office of the Solicitor in Pacific Southwest Region, Housing and Urban Development, State of Nevada Housing Division, Appraisal Services Directorate, Clark County and Nevada HAND made this BLM land sale an unprecedented reality."

Joyce Wolfe, a resident of Harmon Pines said she signed up for Harmon Pines sight-unseen.

"I read about all the amenities, including the computer center, library, game room, beauty salon, fitness center, theater, medical examination room and free transportation for errands and knew this would be the place for me. And I was right!"

Harmon Pines has 105 apartments and monthly rents start at \$390 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$460 for a two-bedroom apartment. Qualifying seniors have an annual income starting at \$17,880 for a one-person household or \$20,440 for a two-person household.

In November 2007, BLM patented a 10-acre affordable housing parcel for the discounted price of \$475,000 (fair market price was appraised at \$9.5 million.) The land was used to construct multi-family rental housing, called Arbor Pointe Family Apartments, which opened in May.

SNPLMA authorizes BLM to sell public land at discounted rates to state or local government entities, including housing authorities, for affordable housing projects. SNPLMA and state guidelines provide for up to 95 percent discounts to develop housing for very low, low and moderate income persons. Discounts are based on building costs, land sale prices and incomes for a specific area. The resulting policies and procedures, known as the "Nevada Guidance," apply throughout the state.

More than 1,190 acres are currently reserved in the Las Vegas Valley for affordable housing. Clark County has reserved 960 acres, State of Nevada has reserved 112 acres, City of Henderson has reserved 70 acres and City of Las Vegas has reserved 57 acres.

Kirsten Cannon

Southern Nevada District Office



From left to right in the middle of the photo: Clark County Commissioner Susan Brager, BLM Southern Nevada District Manager Mary Jo Rugwell and Project Developer Jonathan Fore cut the ribbon, signifying the grand opening of Arbor Pointe Apartments.

Solving the Mystery of the Curly Horses

Wild Horse and Burro Specialist Shawna Richardson had been putting in long hours for weeks gathering hundreds of horses from across the Callaghan Complex in the middle of the bitter cold winter. While the job is sometimes tedious and tough, there is a unique aspect to this gather that creates some excitement:

as the helicopter descends over the hills to guide the horses into the trap, she wonders if this batch of horses will have any Curly horses in it. The Curly horses are rare, with their mysterious genetics producing horses with curly rings of hair all over their bodies—as well as curly eyelashes, kinky manes and tails and curly hair in their ears. Another interesting aspect of these animals is that—like the poodles of the dog world—they are hypoallergenic!

Shawna is not alone with her fascination of these unique creatures. Dr. Mitch Wilkinson, Texas curly horse researcher, and Terry Schmidt, president of the International Curly Horse Association, attended the Callaghan Complex gather and took hair and blood samples from the gathered Curlies to try to unlock the genetic mystery.

The origin of the Curly horses is also a great mystery. Horses with curly coats are depicted in art and statuary from early China; there is evidence of their presence in South America and Europe; and many Indian pictographs illustrate that the Sioux had stolen some Curly horses from the Crow. Some theorized that the Russian Bashkir Curly horses were originally shipped with the Russian colonist who tried to settle

America's Northwest territory during the 1700s, but further research determined there were no curly haired horses from the Bashkir region, yet the name "Bashkir Curlies" has stuck in some horse circles in America.



Dr. Mitch Wilkinson takes a blood sample from a Curly horse gathered on the Callaghan Complex range near Austin, Nev.

Now, more is known about the development of the modern Curly horses, thanks to the Damele family that settled in Central Nevada, near Austin. According to a report written by Shan Thomas, *The Curly Horse in America, Myth and Mystery*, Curly horses were sighted by the Damele family back in 1899. John Damele reported that in 1932 "a winter of fearsome proportion hit the Great Basin.

Domestic and wild stock froze or starved to death. When the horses were rounded up in the spring almost all of the straight-haired stock horses used on the Three Bars Ranch had perished. In among the remaining few were some curly horses—worn but definitely alive."

The Damele family Dry Creek Ranch Three D brand is a brand many Curly horses in America still carry today.

In March, seven Curly horses gathered from the Callaghan Complex were available for adoption at the Palomino Valley Center outside Reno. Thanks to efforts by Dr. Wilkinson to get the word out to fellow Curly horse lovers, all seven were adopted to good homes – including one to Wilkinson himself.

Nevada Couple is Recognized Nationally by BLM for Their Volunteer Efforts

Don and Joanne Murray, volunteers for the Carson City District, are recipients of the BLM's 2009 "Making a Difference" National Volunteer Awards for outstanding volunteer service or volunteer program leadership on public lands. A national panel of BLM and partner representatives selected the award winners from more than 60 nominations submitted by BLM state offices.

The Murrays were selected for their exceptional contributions to conservation and management of the public lands. They have been logging more than 3,000 volunteer hours per year as the cornerstone of the archaeological site stewardship program for BLM throughout western Nevada. They raise public awareness about conservation and protection of public lands, ensure public safety and access and protect irreplaceable cultural and paleontological resources.

Under Joanne's direction, local volunteers monitor more than 80 archaeological and paleontological sites for three BLM field offices, and at the Black Rock-High Rock Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area. In 2008, Joanne expanded the stewardship program to include monitoring of the Ruhensstroh area of the Pine Nut Mountains, a unique paleontological area with vertebrate fossils.

Working with the Nevada Rock Art Foundation, Don documented rock art sites, inked pictograph drawings for reports and completed other technical paperwork. Don also created a database for GPS site data, and he regularly provides BLM with detailed spreadsheets of stewardship reports.

Mark Struble
Carson City District Office



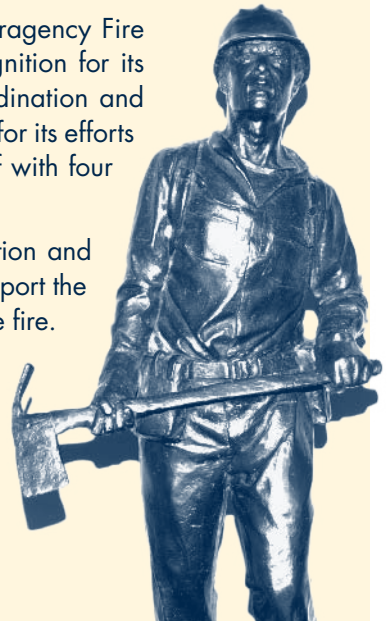
Top: Don Murray documents a boulder with rock art
Bottom: Joanne Murray documents a rock art site at Dry Lakes with the Nevada Rock Art Foundation

Nevada Interagency Fire Operations Committee Wins Prestigious Pulaski Award

The Fire Directors at the National Interagency Fire Center have awarded Nevada's Interagency Fire Operations Committee (NIFOC) the 2008 Pulaski Award. The NIFOC earned the recognition for its exceptional work in developing partnerships oriented to interagency cooperation, coordination and standardization in fire management in Nevada. Specifically, the committee was rewarded for its efforts to expand and improve the role of Type 3 team operations. That work is now paying off with four effective Interagency Type 3 teams in Nevada.

The "Type" of team responding to fires is based on the complexity of the fire (size, location and proximity to buildings, as well as the amount of people and logistical support needed to support the operation). Fires utilize Types 1-5, with a Type 5 fire being the smallest, such as a single-tree fire.

The Pulaski Award is a national annual award for outstanding contributions to wildland firefighting and America's wildland firefighters. The award itself, a 30-inch bronze statue created by Larry Nolan, is a model of one of three 8-foot statues of firefighters placed at the Wildland Firefighters Monument in Boise. The Pulaski tool is a half-axe, half-hoe tool uniquely designed for wildland firefighting. It was named after a forest ranger who led a crew through thick smoke, heat and flames to the safety of a railroad tunnel during the Montana-Idaho inferno of 1910.



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